



# BENEWAH COUNTY PROFILE

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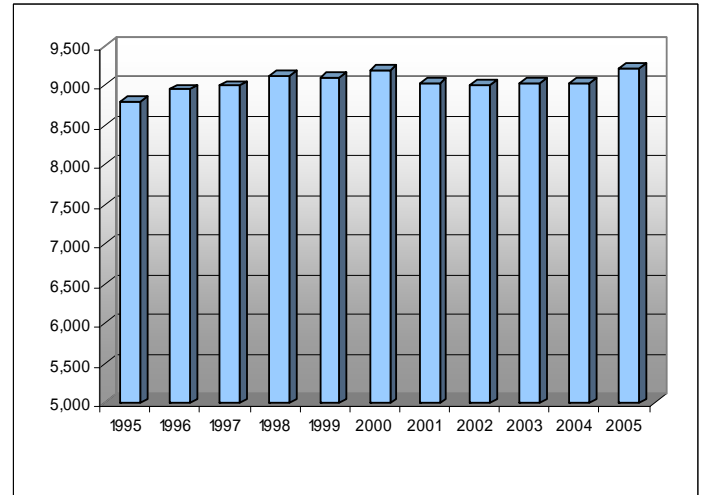
## Population

Benewah County experienced fairly strong population growth in the 1990s. Its rural lifestyle and great hunting and fishing opportunities persuaded many people to move there.

From 1995 to 2005, the county's population grew 5 percent from 8,795 to 9,218, while Idaho's population grew 21 percent and the U.S. population grew 13 percent.

Recent improvements in the local economy and its growing attractiveness as a place to retire are likely to increase population growth during the next couple of years.

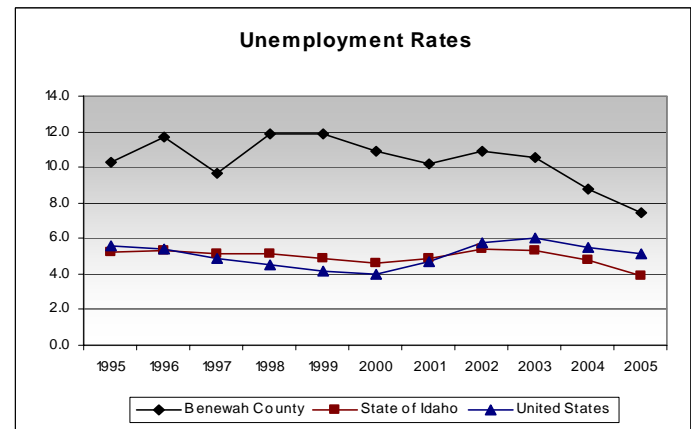
The populations of the county's largest cities are: St. Maries, 2,580; Plummer, 980; and Tensed, 130.



## Labor Force & Employment

Benewah County's economy remains heavily dependent on forest products. The county has only 65 jobs in manufacturing outside of forest products. Despite the county's beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities, its tourism sector employs fewer than 200 people. The dependence on forest products made the county vulnerable to high unemployment as forest products downsized from 1998 to 2002. In 1998, the Rayonier mill in Plummer closed. In 2001, a new mill using small-dimension logs—Plummer Forest Products—opened there, creating 70 jobs. After the summer of 2003, lumber and plywood prices improved markedly, allowing the lumber industry to increase employment.

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe, whose reservation extends from western Benewah County into southern Kootenai County, has been the main engine of growth in recent years. It employs about 400 people in Benewah County and another 700 at its casino and hotel in Worley, just over the county line.

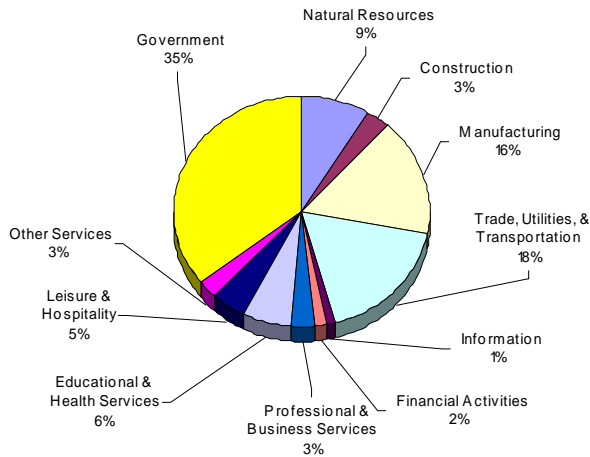


Because so much of the county's income comes from forests and farms, employment peaks in late summer and drops off as winter approaches. When frost begins to leave the ground in spring, load limitations are placed on muddy roads, forcing many loggers and truck drivers out of work. The resulting drop in income reduces employment at stores and other businesses. In 2005, for example, the unadjusted unemployment rate peaked at 11.9 percent in April and fell to 4.9 percent in September. High unemployment in the winter and early spring is a major reason why Benewah County's annual unemployment rate remains relatively high.

| Labor Force                 | May 2005 | May 2006 |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|
| Civilian Labor Force        | 3,968    | 4,006    |
| Total Employment            | 3,716    | 3,775    |
| Unemployed                  | 252      | 231      |
| Benewah County % Unemployed | 6.3      | 5.8      |
| State of Idaho % Unemployed | 3.9      | 3.4      |
| U.S. % Unemployed           | 5.1      | 4.7      |

| Labor Force                 | 1995  | 1996  | 1997  | 1998  | 1999  | 2000  | 2001  | 2002  | 2003  | 2004  | 2005  |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Civilian Labor Force        | 4,178 | 4,306 | 4,361 | 4,517 | 4,421 | 3,996 | 4,011 | 4,028 | 3,953 | 4,035 | 4,122 |
| Unemployment                | 432   | 503   | 425   | 538   | 528   | 437   | 409   | 440   | 418   | 355   | 306   |
| % of Labor Force Unemployed | 10.3  | 11.7  | 9.7   | 11.9  | 11.9  | 10.9  | 10.2  | 10.9  | 10.6  | 8.8   | 7.4   |
| Employment                  | 3,746 | 3,803 | 3,936 | 3,979 | 3,893 | 3,559 | 3,601 | 3,588 | 3,535 | 3,680 | 3,817 |

## Nonfarm Payroll Jobs for 2004



## Benewah County Trends

High unemployment, low wages, and falling farm income explain why Benewah County's per capita income of \$23,378 in 2004 was considerably below the state's income of \$26,877 and U.S. income of \$33,305. In addition, business growth has been slow. The number of private-sector businesses with employees in Benewah County edged up from 291 in 1995 to 293 in 2005.

Timber Plus, the St. Maries economic development organization, and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe are making strenuous efforts to recruit potential businesses and otherwise expand employment opportunities in the county.

## Major Employers

|                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| Benewah Community Hospital       |
| Coeur d'Alene Tribe              |
| Jack A. Buell Trucking           |
| Plummer-Worley School District   |
| Potlatch Corp.                   |
| Regulus Stud Mill                |
| St. Maries Joint School District |
| Valley Vista Care (nursing home) |

## Occupational Wages\*

## Starting Wage

|                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Bookkeepers, Full-charge  | \$8.25  |
| Carpenters, Journey-level | \$13.25 |
| Cashiers/Checkers         | \$6.50  |
| Clerks, General Office    | \$7.25  |
| Clerks, Retail            | \$5.90  |
| Cooks, Restaurant         | \$6.50  |
| Janitors                  | \$6.50  |
| Laborers, Construction    | \$9.00  |
| Loggers                   | \$14.00 |
| Millwrights               | \$13.00 |
| Nurses, Registered        | \$17.50 |
| Sawmill Workers           | \$10.20 |
| Secretaries, General      | \$7.70  |
| Truck Drivers, Heavy      | \$12.00 |

\* Additional Occupational Wage data can be found on the Idaho Commerce & Labor website at [lmi.idaho.gov](http://lmi.idaho.gov)

| Covered Employment & Average Annual Wages Per Job for 1994, 2003, & 2004 | 1994               |               | 2003               |               | 2004               |               |
|--|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
|  | Average Employment | Average Wages | Average Employment | Average Wages | Average Employment | Average Wages |
| Total Covered Wages  | 3,022              | \$22,005      | 3,422              | \$26,984      | 3,498              | \$28,754      |
| Agriculture  | 301                | \$28,307      | 291                | \$33,134      | 317                | \$34,303      |
| Mining   | *                  | *             | *                  | *             | *                  | *             |
| Construction   | 112                | \$18,650      | 105                | \$26,882      | 114                | \$26,402      |
| Manufacturing  | 510                | \$29,321      | 547                | \$34,224      | 564                | \$37,436      |
| Trade, Utilities, & Transportation                                       | 521                | \$21,847      | 615                | \$25,041      | 627                | \$26,886      |
| Information  | 28                 | \$20,024      | 33                 | \$23,021      | 37                 | \$20,134      |
| Financial Activities   | 78                 | \$15,433      | 57                 | \$17,671      | 54                 | \$17,135      |
| Professional and Business Services                                       | 121                | \$26,861      | 103                | \$30,031      | 102                | \$35,680      |
| Educational and Health Services  | 232                | \$17,973      | 220                | \$20,375      | 211                | \$21,218      |
| Leisure and Hospitality  | 190                | \$5,450       | 156                | \$6,748       | 155                | \$6,584       |
| Other Services   | 79                 | \$12,954      | 81                 | \$20,139      | 66                 | \$22,035      |
| Government   | 801                | \$20,884      | 1,177              | \$27,735      | 1,208              | \$29,098      |

| Per Capita Income | 1995     | 1996     | 1997     | 1998     | 1999     | 2000     | 2001     | 2002     | 2003     | 2004     |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Benewah County    | \$17,419 | \$18,433 | \$18,912 | \$19,100 | \$19,703 | \$20,213 | \$21,588 | \$21,028 | \$21,348 | \$23,378 |
| State of Idaho    | \$18,707 | \$19,426 | \$20,248 | \$20,648 | \$21,789 | \$22,786 | \$24,075 | \$25,185 | \$25,330 | \$26,877 |
| United States     | \$22,172 | \$23,076 | \$24,175 | \$25,334 | \$26,883 | \$27,939 | \$29,845 | \$30,575 | \$30,804 | \$31,472 |

Information provided by U.S. Census Bureau

This county is served by the office located at the address below:  
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